

1                   IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
2                   FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND  
3           MELVIN NEWSOME, et al.       \*       CIVIL ACTION S01-2257  
4                   Plaintiffs                               \*  
5                   vs.                                        Baltimore, Maryland  
6   \*  
7           UP-TO-DATE LAUNDRY, INC,       \*       March 25, 2003  
8                   et al.                                    \*  
9                   Defendants                               \*       \*       \*  
10   \*       \*       \*  
11                   Deposition of RUDOLPH CURTIS, a witness of  
12                   lawful age, taken on behalf of the Defendants in the  
13                   above-entitled cause, pending in the District Court of  
14                   the United States for the District of Maryland, before  
15                   Dawn L. Venker, a Notary Public in and for Baltimore  
16                   County, Maryland, at 7 St. Paul Street, 15th Floor,  
17                   Baltimore, Maryland 21202, on 25th day of March, 2003.  
18   \*       \*       \*       \*       \*  
19           APPEARANCES:  
20   RICHARD A. SALZMAN, Esquire  
21   PHILIP SIMON, Esquire  
   For the Plaintiffs  
   JEANNE M. PHELAN, Esquire  
   For the Defendants  
Reported By: Dawn L. Venker

TOWSON REPORTING COMPANY  
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1           A       I mean racial slurs, remarks.

2           Q       Was there any particular remark that caused  
3   you to go?

4                   MR. SALZMAN:  Are you talking about the  
5   second time?

6                   MS. PHELAN:  The second time.

7           A       Yeah.  Being called nigger, assholes,  
8   mother fuckers, or you can kiss my ass, or that bitch  
9   here, that bitch there.  Respect don't cost you  
10  anything.  I think they were very unprofessional in a  
11  company.

12          Q       We'll go through some of that in detail,  
13  but what I'm trying to figure out now, was there any  
14  particular event that was kind of the straw that broke  
15  the camel's back?  The last straw that caused you to  
16  leave the second time?

17          A       Just seeing certain things.  Just seeing  
18  different things happen in the company.  I couldn't  
19  tolerate that.

20          Q       Let's go through that in detail then.  Tell  
21  me what you recall happening.

1 MR. SALZMAN: We have been going for a  
2 while. Do you want to take a little break. About an  
3 hour and a half?

4 MS. PHELAN: Yeah. If you want to.

5 MR. SALZMAN: Take five minutes.

6 (A recess was taken.)

7 Q Before we took a break, we were starting to  
8 talk about -- you indicated that people had made  
9 comments that Nancy, Brad -- I don't know if you said  
10 David also had made comments?

11 A Yes.

12 Q You want to start and go through the entire  
13 list of the things that you heard? So if you want to  
14 start -- if it makes sense to start with the first one  
15 or to start by person, you tell me how you would like  
16 to do it.

17 A Well, one incident I was in the soil room.  
18 Brad -- it was a box up on the big ladder thing against  
19 the wall. Brad told me to get my monkey ass up there  
20 and get the box down, which was uncalled for. I feel  
21 was discrimination. David calling niggers.

1 on that day?

2 A If he did, I tried to block it out.

3 Q Did Brad have any other comments that he  
4 made that you thought were racial?

5 A "If you guys hurry up and do this, I'll buy  
6 you some chicken because I know you black guys love  
7 chicken." He thought it was all funny.

8 Q Tell me when that happened.

9 A Still during the first time I was employed  
10 there, when I was working the soil room.

11 Q Where was Brad?

12 A Excuse me?

13 Q Where was Brad at that point?

14 A In the soil room.

15 Q Was he working?

16 A Excuse me?

17 Q Was he working?

18 A No. Just back there, just -- just saying  
19 whatever he wanted to say to anybody.

20 Q Do you recall if anyone said anything in  
21 response to that comment?

1 A I don't recall.

2 Q Did you ever see any of the employees  
3 make -- or joke with Brad about him eating chicken?

4 A About?

5 Q Joke with Brad about him eating chicken?

6 A No.

7 Q Did you hear any other comments from Brad  
8 that you thought were racial?

9 A He said nigger words a lot.

10 Q What is a lot?

11 A He said it whenever he felt -- he felt like  
12 he wanted to say it.

13 Q How often did you hear it?

14 A Anytime I worked at that laundry I heard  
15 him say anything like that.

16 Q Every day you worked there?

17 A Not every day. Just about.

18 Q And where did he say these words?

19 A In the soil room.

20 Q Was he talking to anyone in particular?

21 A At one time he was talking to everybody

1 that was working on the line.

2 Q Tell me what you heard on that time.

3 A Tell us if we don't hurry our lazy black  
4 asses up and hurry and get this work out, we will all  
5 be out of a job.

6 Q Did he use the word nigger?

7 A Certain times.

8 Q Well, on that particular thing --  
9 particular comment, you told me he said "lazy black  
10 asses"?

11 A Just lazy black asses.

12 Q Did you ever hear anybody else use the word  
13 nigger in the plant?

14 A David.

15 Q How about aside from Brad and David, did  
16 anybody else use it?

17 A I never heard his mother use it, she just  
18 said that blacks that work in the company are nothing  
19 but drug addicts and drunks.

20 Q How about other than Brad, Nancy and David,  
21 did anybody else in the plant use the word nigger?

1 A Not to my knowledge.

2 Q Never heard it from anybody else?

3 A No, ma'am.

4 Q Never heard any of the black employees use  
5 the word nigger?

6 A I could have.

7 Q Do you recall who used it?

8 A No, ma'am.

9 Q Why not?

10 A Because I don't recall who said it. You  
11 can hear it a -- a lot of different things.

12 Q Other than the comments you told me about  
13 regarding Brad, were there any other comments that you  
14 heard Brad make that you thought were racial?

15 A Well, him saying black women just like to  
16 suck penises and stuff like that. How they like it in  
17 the ass and stuff like that. Excuse my language.

18 Q When did that conversation occur?

19 A Throughout my history at working at  
20 Up-To-Date Laundry.

21 Q Throughout all the times you worked there?

1 A Yes, ma'am.

2 Q Was there anyone else present when he said  
3 these things?

4 A Different people be around different times,  
5 but I don't recall names.

6 Q Do you remember who he was talking about?

7 A No.

8 Q Was he talking specifically to you during  
9 these conversations?

10 A Yes.

11 Q What did you say to him?

12 A Told him I wasn't trying to hear it.

13 Q Excuse me?

14 A I told him I wasn't trying to hear it.

15 Q What does that mean?

16 A I didn't want to hear that kind of talk.

17 Q What did he say?

18 A "I don't care what you want to hear. This  
19 is my fucking company. I can say what I want to say."

20 Q Did you ever hear him say any other  
21 comments that you thought were racial?



1           A       I can't remember right now.

2           Q       Can you recall hearing Brad make comments  
3   you thought were racial during the final time that you  
4   worked at Up-To-Date? That time in 1999?

5           A       Yes. One incident when I was working in  
6   the soil room. He had just got a contract with  
7   University -- no, Johns Hopkins Hospital. We was  
8   sorting out the linen, and he told us -- said, "You  
9   some black lazy mother fuckers, you should have been --  
10   had this shit down. I bet if I buy your asses some  
11   chicken, all piece of your asses would be finished."

12          Q       Do you remember who was there?

13          A       It was the second shift. It was a lot of  
14   new people there. Yeah, it was a lot of new people  
15   there.

16          Q       Do you remember any of the people who were  
17   there?

18          A       Not really. But I remember we bought this  
19   pizza. We sat in the break room on our lunch break and  
20   was eating the pizza. And they had this dog, Up-To,  
21   and Ms. Nancy got upset because we didn't share the

1 pizza with the dog, so she gave the dog the whole  
2 pizza. Her and Brad was mumbling something, but what  
3 it was, I don't know. But they was angry.

4 Q How did you know they were angry?

5 A Because they were upset. They didn't want  
6 to talk to us no more. Then told us to hurry up and  
7 eat the fucking pizza and get our asses back to work.

8 Q Who was there?

9 A It was myself and some new employees.

10 Q Who were the other people there?

11 A Melvin Newsome was one guy. I don't recall  
12 the other guy's name.

13 Q Did you think that was based on race?

14 A Yes, I do.

15 Q Why was that?

16 A Because it was just blacks working in that  
17 area during that time. Only blacks was in the soil  
18 room, and the Latinos was out on the main floor.

19 Q The pizza was in the soil room?

20 A No. Brad came back in and told us to hurry  
21 up and finish that shit and he was going to buy some

1           Q       Let's talk about Nancy. Tell me what  
2       comments you recall Nancy making.

3           A       I recall Ms. Nancy Stair making a comment  
4       when the laundry was on Frederick Avenue, during the  
5       ten-minute break, where she said all the blacks is  
6       nothing but drug addicts and alcoholics or drunks, and  
7       they all walked out. She said the Latinos do all the  
8       work. And then she came back. Some people talked to  
9       her and she came back and apologized. It took her a  
10      long while, but she got on the intercom and said it  
11      where it was all over the plant.

12          Q       When you said the comment about all blacks  
13      are nothing but drug addicts and drunks, that was all  
14      made on the intercom?

15          A       Yes.

16          Q       Did something unusual happen that day to  
17      cause that comment?

18          A       I don't know what happened. We was just  
19      working and she just get up there and said it. I don't  
20      think she had no right to even say that.

21          Q       Do you remember when this was?

1 Ralph, but I forgot his last name.

2 Q And I gather you weren't present when they  
3 talked to her?

4 A No, ma'am.

5 Q But you heard her get on the intercom later  
6 and apologize?

7 A Yes.

8 Q What did she say?

9 A She said she apologized for the remarks  
10 that were made. That was it.

11 Q Did she say anything other than that?

12 A No. She just went upstairs and stayed  
13 upstairs.

14 Q Did you ever hear Nancy make any other  
15 comments that you thought were racial?

16 A I thought by her saying that the Latinos  
17 work harder than the blacks and the blacks is nothing  
18 but drunks and drug addicts, I think that is a strike  
19 of discrimination. You are putting down a race for no  
20 apparent reason.

21 Q That's the conversation on the intercom

1 that you told me about?

2 A She told me this one-on-one when she had me  
3 in the office. She just repeated herself.

4 Q Let's talk about the one-on-one. When did  
5 she tell you that?

6 A The time when I had filed this  
7 discrimination thing against her.

8 Q And tell me what it is she said.

9 A She asked me how could I believe that she  
10 was racist or prejudiced.

11 Q And you said?

12 A I said, "Because I want equal pay, and we  
13 work just about the same hours and do the same length  
14 of work and I'm not getting equal pay."

15 Q What did she say?

16 A She said she would evaluate me and I would  
17 soon -- and that determines if I get the raise.

18 Q And then what did she say?

19 A She said no more about it. I never seen a  
20 raise.

21 Q Well, somehow in that conversation I missed

1           A       I didn't say anything.

2           Q       That was it, that's the end of the  
3 conversation?

4           A       Yes, I guess that's the end of the  
5 conversation.

6           Q       Were there any other occasions where you  
7 heard Ms. Stair say something that you thought was  
8 racial?

9           A       I don't know. I can't recall right now.

10          Q       And then what about David? What did you  
11 ever hear David say that you thought was racial?

12          A       David come in the company every day saying  
13 racial things. Nigger this. Nigger that. Or mother  
14 fucker or Aunt Jemima. Kiss my ass, bitch. Suck my  
15 dick. Fuck you and your mama. And if you don't like  
16 what I'm saying, I'll have my mom fire you, or Brad  
17 will get rid of your ass. We don't fucking need you  
18 nigger. Stuff like that.

19          Q       How often would he say things like that?

20          A       Just about every day.

21          Q       Did you ever see how David talked to the

1 Hispanic employees?

2 A David -- I never seen David say something  
3 like that to the Hispanic employees.

4 Q Did you ever see how Brad interacted with  
5 white employees?

6 A Respectfully.

7 Q How did David interact with white  
8 employees?

9 A Respectfully.

10 Q Never saw David get mad at anybody that was  
11 white?

12 A No. Yeah. Yes, one time. This guy --  
13 this one guy that was in the soil room, David asked him  
14 how could he stand working back there with all that  
15 blood and all them black niggers.

16 Q Did you ever see how David and Brad  
17 interacted?

18 A Yes. They argued with each other  
19 constantly. They were intoxicated. Arguing in front  
20 of other employees.

21 Q Did they curse each other?

1           A       Yes. They fought in the company before. I  
2 think twice.

3           Q       Did you interact with David for work  
4 purposes?

5           A       I worked with David a couple times on the  
6 truck. He would holler out of the truck when people  
7 passing by and say get your black ass out of the way  
8 nigger. And stuff like that. He thought it was funny.

9           Q       That would be David driving the truck?

10          A       Yes.

11          Q       And you are working as a helper with him?

12          A       Yes.

13          Q       If David treated you like this, why did you  
14 go back when he asked you to go back?

15          A       Like I said, the job was close by me. I  
16 didn't have to go far to go to work.

17          Q       Did you ever talk with David about it?

18          A       Excuse me? In reference to?

19          Q       Well, David says come back to work. Didn't  
20 you say, "David, why should I come back to work if you  
21 call me a nigger and use all these racial terms?"



1 A No. Unh-unh. Unh-unh.

2 Q Why not?

3 A I talked to their mother one time about  
4 their attitudes and stuff like that. She said, "You  
5 know how they are." It wasn't never anything done  
6 about it.

7 Q When did you talk to the mother?

8 A Soon after I had problems with Brad or  
9 David. It seemed like it didn't matter.

10 Q Was that during the first time that you  
11 were employed there?

12 A First. Second. Third. Fourth.

13 Q So you went to Nancy on various occasions  
14 about this?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Did David specifically use racial terms  
17 regarding you?

18 A Kunta. Kunta. It's a lot of stuff. David  
19 would be saying to anybody, any black -- they feel like  
20 he can say what he want to say. He says it.

21 Q What I'm trying to figure out is if he ever

1 said it to you?

2 A Yeah. Racial slurs to me.

3 Q What kinds of things did he say to you?

4 A Get your black ass over here nigger. You  
5 little black mother fucker. Oh, kiss my ass. Kiss the  
6 head of my dick. I just look at him. I'm not trying  
7 to be locked up.

8 Q Excuse me?

9 A I said I'm not trying to get locked up for  
10 people using racial slurs or anything like that. That  
11 stuff hurts. I'm not ashamed to say that.

12 Q When you say "it hurts," what do you mean?

13 A I mean being called racial names and stuff  
14 like that.

15 Q And how did it hurt?

16 A I mean it hurts your pride. I mean people  
17 call you discriminating things and think it is funny.  
18 You are supposed to accept it and stuff like that, but  
19 I like my job, so I was doing my job.

20 Q Between the second time you worked at  
21 Up-To-Date and the third, did you work at anywhere

1 Q Did you ever talk with any of the people  
2 who worked with the union? The organizers or the reps?

3 A No, ma'am.

4 Q Never ever?

5 A No, ma'am.

6 Q Did you know Laverne Lipscomb?

7 A Excuse me?

8 Q Do you know Laverne Lipscomb?

9 A Yeah. Somebody that worked the laundry.  
10 If they still do.

11 Q Did you ever talk with her other than to  
12 say hi?

13 A No, ma'am.

14 Q Your answer to interrogatories you indicate  
15 that Brad told you that Hispanic employees such as  
16 Santos worked harder, then fired you?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Tell me about that.

19 A He said Santos -- Brad said that Santos  
20 worked harder than five blacks put together.

21 Q And how did that come up?